



1st Armored Division



America's Tank Division
IRONSIDE
Fall Edition 2006

**Trading Tactics
with NATO Allies**

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Inside this Edition



Bulgarian, Romanian and U.S. troops team up to conduct Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) training at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria in July. This combined forces training was a part of exercise Immediate Response '06. See story page 16 (Photo by SPC Andrew Orillion)

On the cover: Peering through the sight of an AK-47 rifle, a Bulgarian troop joins Romanian and American Soldiers in a combined forces exercise at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria during exercise Immediate Response '06. (Photo by SGT John Queen, 69th ADA Brigade Public Affairs)

On the back: Combined forces from the Bulgarian Army, Romanian 26th Infantry Regiment, and the 1st Battalion 94th Field Artillery Regiment touch down at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria after successfully completing an air assault mission in Romania, July 21. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk, 1 AD Public Affairs)

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Words from the 1st Armored Division Commanding General

MG Fred D. Robinson Jr.

Iron Soldiers! As 2007 rapidly approaches and we begin to chart the future of this Division, I must take a moment and reflect on all you have accomplished. Your skills as warriors, your personal sacrifice, your dedication to the mission and the steadfast support of our families made 2006 a milestone year in the Old Ironside's Division history.

Our 2nd Brigade Combat Team has completed its mission and proved itself as one of the Army's most adaptable forces by providing the OIF theater

commander the flexibility needed to respond to a rapidly changing situation and surge combat power when and where needed. The 1st Brigade Combat

Team has stood its ground in one of the most difficult regions in Iraq and continues to make progress against the insurgency and bolster the quality of life of Iraqi citizens. And now, our 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Infantry Division has completed its deployment and is engaged in the OIF fight.

As you know, fighting the war on terror is no easy task. It requires personal resolve, commitment, and sacrifice on the part of both Soldier and family. No where have I seen greater resolve and commitment than during the recent announcement to extend the deployment of the 1st BCT. Amid the uncertainty and certainly disappointment this outfit, its Soldiers and its families have never taken their focus off the mission. Soldiers have remained steadfast in the fight and families have remained steadfast in

their support for their Soldiers. I am personally amazed everyday at your heart and devotion. I am committed to ensuring you are cared for and this entire division and all of its resources stand ready to help get you through these times. This commitment is not limited to just 1st BCT but applies to every Soldier and family member under the 1st AD umbrella.

Over the past several months, the 1st AD family has grown with the addition of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment and the newly formed 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. The 2nd SCR has returned to Germany after

more than a decade of duty in the United States. Rebased this fabled regiment in Vilseck and bringing it into the 1AD family opens tremendous opportunities. The assignment of the 2nd SCR and the 12th Chemi-

MG Fred D. Robinson Jr.

cal Company, which has been added to the regimental formation, also reaffirms the United States Army's commitment to its allies and friends in NATO. To the regiment- your rebasing in Vilseck next to Europe's premier training facility is no mistake – take advantage of every opportunity to prepare for combat. I challenge you to get to know and enjoy the Bavarian people and communities, they have so much to offer.

The creation of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade and its standing up in Katterbach and Illesheim have been flawless. This unit has been constituted from some of the Army's finest and most combat proven aviation formations in the Army and is part of the Army's transformation plan.

It will no doubt help make USAREUR and the 1st AD some of the most capable formations in the world. I want to welcome all, to include many smaller formations that have joined our ranks – many now



deployed or preparing to deploy - thanks for your service.

Despite everything that is happening, one thing will remain a constant for the upcoming year, my commitment to having the best trained Soldiers and units in the entire U.S. Army. Through the end of 2006 and during the upcoming year we will see a continuation of multi-echelon, integrated training.

We will be made stronger by the total implementation of the Army's new 40 Warrior Tasks and 11 Battle Drills. This growing of tasks and battle drills, referred to as 40 and 11 are based on relevant requirements of Soldiers as they conduct operations in the contemporary operating environment downrange. These replace the old Common Task Testing and I am convinced will help give all Iron Soldiers an edge in the Global War on Terrorism. These will also be an integral part of the Iron Warrior program which remains a centerpiece and building block on everything we do.

Another edge will come from the upcoming Division level exercises which conclude with a major

event conducted by the Army called War Fighter. This will require everyone to be at their utmost level of readiness. As always our top priority is to prepare the Soldiers of the 1st AD for battle and ensure the welfare of every family member as we continue in this Global War on Terrorism.

Finally to the Soldiers and family members of the Iron Division, neither I nor the nation can ever adequately repay you for your devotion and your sacrifices. I am extremely proud of all of you, for your dedication to the cause of freedom and your service to a grateful nation. Thank you for your service and may God bless each and every one of you and may God bless America.

Iron Soldiers make a difference everyday and will always be prepared for battle.

After 19 years of dedication and service to America's Tank Division ...

1AD bids farewell to BG Tucker



BG Michael S. Tucker, 1st Armored Division's Assistant Division Commander for Support, shares his thanks and gratitude to the 1AD leadership, Soldiers, family and friends during his farewell-Tattoo ceremony June 13. The Tattoo ceremony, held at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, highlighted Tucker's 1 AD successes and military accomplishments. (Photo by MSG David Melancon, Photo Illustration by SPC Tanya C. Polk.)

Story by SPC Tanya C. Polk
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

The 1st Armored Division bid farewell to the Assistant Division Commander for Support at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, June 13.

The Iron Division honored BG Michael S. Tucker in a Tattoo ceremony that highlighted his

accomplishments throughout the division and his military career.

As tradition to Tattoo ceremonies, the 1AD band performed a musical tribute for Tucker and honored his successes.

Tucker has a long history with 1AD. In a combined 19 years, he served as both a private and a lieutenant for the 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, commanded the Ready First Brigade based out of Friedberg, deployed the brigade to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, served as the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver and served as the Assistant Division Commander for Support.

MG Fred D. Robinson Jr., 1AD commanding general, awarded Tucker the Legion of Merit for his success within the division.

"The division was able to recover, grow and achieve the standard because of the efforts of this amazing warrior," said Robinson during the ceremony.

While wearing his decoration, Tucker thanked the division leadership, Soldiers, family and

comrades.

"This is a special moment for me personally because, I've not just served in this great division, but it's here where I've grown up," said Tucker.

"I've served this division well, and I've given it my all. It is without question the Old Ironsides have been a blueprint on my service to the Army," he said.

Tucker is leaving the Iron Division to become the Deputy Commanding General at Fort Knox in Kentucky.



1AD says goodbye to spiritual leader, welcomes new shepherd

Story by SPC Tanya C. Polk
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

The 1st Armored Division bid farewell to its Iron Shepherd and welcomed a new division chaplain during a "Change of Stole" ceremony held the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Chapel, June 22.

The stole is worn loosely around a chaplain's neck. It symbolizes the spiritual leadership and responsibility of a chaplain.

After providing spiritual leadership and guidance for the division to include Operation Iraqi Freedom, Chaplain (LTC) James Lamar Griffin handed his stole to Chaplain (LTC) Robert T. Meek.

"You've (Griffin) set the standards for ministry - second to none in the service of Old Ironsides," said Major General Fred D. Robinson Jr., 1 AD commanding general.

"When Iron Soldiers of any rank need spiritual leadership, you've answered the calls boldly and our

hearts, our spirits, our souls were sustained and our problems diminished," he said.

Griffin is being assigned to the National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

"It's been a great honor to serve as your Iron Shepherd" said Griffin. "I'm greatly humbled and I'll always remember it as the greatest assignment that I ever had."

COL Donald Rutherford, U.S. Army Europe chaplain, bestowed the stole onto the new Shepherd, Meek, the former Pastor of the Main Post Chapel at Fort Leavenworth Kansas.

"I'm humbled and honored to be called to serve America's Tank Division," Meek said after accepting Iron Stole.

"May Almighty God keep this division, its Iron Soldiers, family members, and our Iron civilians who resource this great division in the palm of his hands," he said.



Chaplain (LTC) Robert T. Meek, the new 1st Armored Division chaplain, provides the benediction during the "Change of Stole" ceremony at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Chapel, June 22. Meek, the former Pastor of the Fort Leavenworth Main Post Chapel, is assuming the spiritual leadership role over Chaplain (LTC) James Lamar Griffin (far left.) (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)

Stryker regiment arrives in Europe

After 14 years, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment returns to Germany



A 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldier guides a newly arrived Stryker combat vehicle off a railroad flatcar at the U.S. Army Garrison, Vilseck railhead in Germany July 28. About 300 Strykers and about 1,700 other vehicles and containers were offloaded from the U.S.N.S. Mendonca and her sister ship, the U.S.N.S. Cape Decision, last week in the German port city of Bremerhaven. The vehicles traveled under their own power to the regiment's motor pools, marking the official end of sea and land journey from Fort Lewis, Wash. (Photo by Dave Melancon, USAREUR Public Affairs)

**Story by Dave Melancon
USAREUR Public Affairs**

Three hundred Stryker combat vehicles from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment began rolling in to Vilseck, July 28. This move places one of the nation's most technologically advances, best-equipped ground combat forma-

tions in the heart of Europe, bringing new capabilities to NATO and U.S. European Command.

The Stryker is a lightly armored, wheeled vehicle, capable of speeds up to 60 miles per hour, and equipped with electronics communications equipment that provide Soldiers at all levels information on where they are, where other elements of the unit are, and where known enemy formations are. The communications also allow real-time updating, which gives the unit the flexibility to change

missions and objectives "on the fly" as new information becomes available.

Stryker's arrival is a part of an ongoing transformation by U.S. Army, Europe, which reduces the amount of Soldiers stationed in Europe from 63,000 to 28,000. However, the reduction in combat power is much less- USAREUR before transformation could muster five combat brigades, four of them either heavy infantry or armor.

After transformation, two modularized brigade combat teams (the 2nd Cavalry and the 173rd Airborne) will be permanently stationed in Europe. The capabilities of the Stryker-equipped 2nd Cavalry Regiment are an important part of maintaining a significant U.S. ground combat capability in Europe, suited to the missions and contingency operations U.S. forces in Europe are likely to face.

"The Stryker regiment maintains the lethality of the forces you have stationed here and improves the ability to move quickly, to deploy quickly," Army MG Mark Hertling, USAREUR deputy chief of staff for operations said. "You can pick up the Stryker out of an airfield, or in a theater support vessel, a ship, and send it places very quickly. It gives the EUCOM commander the deploy ability and operational flexibility to get to places for contingency operations.

He said Stryker's maneuverability also supports the critical EUCOM theater security cooperation mission.

"We can quickly and easily move this organization to different countries within EUCOM to conduct exercises, or to help train other nations," Hertling said.

"The Stryker concept is different. We owe it not only to our own forces but also to our allies to demonstrate that capability and showcase it," said Army COL John RisCassi, commander of the regiment,

One Stryker Soldier discussed the Force 21 Battle Command Brigade and Below digital combat control system, which acts as a tactical Internet incorporating communications and global positioning systems, with a graphic interface showing friendly forces in blue and enemy forces, when identified, in red. FBCB2 incorpo-

rated intelligence reports and updates added by any member of the unit for a near-real-time view shared by each vehicle equipped with the system.

"With the FBCB2, you've got instant messaging; you've got full battlefield display. You can see where all the other vehicles are, where you are maneuvering, where everyone else is going, so it makes it much easier to move and communicate," said Army SGT Tyrel Disney, a vehicle commander in Charlie Company, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment.

"Because of the intelligence systems and the command-and-control systems embedded in every vehicle, the unit can take missions on the fly," Hertling said.

The brigade has another advantage: along with the Stryker vehicle itself, and the situational awareness provided by the advanced technologies, the 2nd Cav. Regt. also features a massive infantry force for a unit of its size, along with all the supporting units it needs to deploy and fight.

"The Stryker Brigade has a lot more infantry capability than a normal infantry brigade- almost as much as an entire mechanized division within this one brigade," Hertling said. "It can cover much more ground, it has the ability to reach back to operational and even strategic intelligence resources and it has the ability to pack up and move quickly - operationally and strategically- from one theater to another, and then intra-theater from one location to another. So it's a fast, mobile, lethal and smart organization."

Hertling said the Stryker covers a much larger battle space than a comparable infantry or tank brigade, which together with the unit's equipment and capabilities gives rise to unique operational methods



1 AD and USAREUR formally welcomes back 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment

Story by SPC Andrew Orillion
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

Six regiments lined one side of the field, standing tall and proud as MG Fred D. Robinson, commander, 1st Armored Division, reviewed them from the turret of a Stryker vehicle. Cannons roared and the 1st AD band struck a chord as United States Army Europe celebrated the return of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

The ceremony marked the return of the 2nd SCR to Germany after a 14 year absence. The regiment had previously been stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington.

"The transition back to Germany represents a year of intense planning," said MAJ Jon Pendell, unit public affairs representative, 2nd SCR. "It also represents a major stepping stone toward increased readiness for all of USAREUR."

The 2nd SCR is one of only five Stryker regiments in the Army and the first to be stationed in Vilseck, Germany. Positioning the unit in Vilseck means a great deal for the regiment, its soldiers, their families, the local German community and our European allies.

"Putting the regiment in Vilseck means that the Grafenwoehr Training Area will be our back yard which means more opportunities to train," Pendell said. "It is also a chance to show off the lethality of the Stryker to our NATO and European allies."

For the families, the repositioning of the 2nd SCR is more than just a change of station, said Pendell. It is a chance to experience German culture first hand.

But the greatest benefit is not for the individual soldiers, said GEN David D. McKiernan, Commanding General USAREUR & 7th Army and Commander, Allied Land Component Command Heidelberg. The greatest benefit is to the Army itself.

"Putting the 2nd SCR in USAREUR reaffirms our strong commitment to NATO and our European allies," McKiernan said. "We have a long history of sharing our assets with our allies.



2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, commanded by LTC Myron Reineke performs a pass and review during the 2nd SCR Welcome Ceremony in Vilseck, Germany Sept. 15. The 2nd SCR is returning to Vilseck, Germany from Fort Lewis Washington. (Photo by SPC Andrew Orillion)

Positioning the regiment here will help to strengthen our ties with NATO and our other European allies."

For the regiment, the return to Vilseck is another chapter in the storied history of the 2nd SCR. The regiment first saw action in 1836,

when it fought in Seminole Indian Wars in Florida and

was known as the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. The regiment went on to fight in every major campaign including Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 1992 the regiment moved from Germany to Fort Polk, Louisiana. The regiment later moved to Ft. Lewis before the decision was made to move the regiment back to Germany.

"The 2nd SCR has a historical connection to Germany and this regiment has a strong scenes of heritage," said COL Bob

"We have a long history of sharing our assets with our allies. Positioning the regiment here will help to strengthen our ties with NATO and our other European allies."

GEN David D. McKiernan
U.S. Army Europe Commanding General

RiScossi, commander 2nd SCR. "That is one of the reasons this regiment was tapped to return to Germany."

A piece of this heritage was present during the ceremony in the person of Merritt H. Powell, a former SFC and member of the 2nd SCR from the 1950's. Powell was attending the welcome ceremony in his capacity as the Honorary Regimental Bagpiper. But even if he didn't play the bagpipes, as a former member of the 2nd SCR, Powell felt an obligation to his old regiment.

"I am an old soldier, and even though I have served in many other units, the 2nd SCR will always be home to me," Powell said.

The welcome ceremony was attended by several VIP's including McKeirnan, Robinson, William R. Timken Jr., U.S. ambassador to Germany and representatives of the local Bavarian government. Dr. Edmund Stoiber, Bavarian Minister-President welcomed all the new troops to his native Bavaria.

"The U.S. Army and Bavaria have been closely connected for 60 years and cannot be separated," Stoiber said. "You have the advantage and the luck to serve in Bavaria for sometime. Bavaria is without a doubt one of the most beautiful countries in the world and you should be happy to serve in such a friendly environment."

Stoiber too, felt that the repositioning of the 2nd SCR was of tremendous benefit to NATO and other European allies.

"I believe that joint training and mutual understanding between the Soldiers of the different NATO members are crucial to accomplishing joint foreign deployments to establish and preserve peace."

The 2nd SCR is already planning its first joint training exercise, an exercise with the Joint Task Force East, scheduled for next year.





**Story by SPC Jennifer McFadden
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs**

Overcoming exhaustion, heat, rain, blisters and injuries the competitors drove on. They kept with their journey; the journey to earn the title Top Warrior.

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1st Armored Division's defines Top Warriors during **2006 NCO, Soldier of the Year Competition**



SGT David Bullard, a Soldier with the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion, 1st Armored Division, reacts to a mock chemical attack by donning his protective mask and proceeding to mission oriented posture level 4. The scenario was part of a four-day competition held July 10-13 at McCully Barracks, Wackernheim Germany and included 1st Armored Division's separate units such as 5th Battalion, 7th Brigade, Hanau and 4th Brigade, Ansbach.

Its all about motivation, that is the key said SGM Thomas Klingel, 1st Armored Division's training sergeant major.

Soldiers with the 1st Armored Division -both organic and separate units -competed for that honor. The noncommissioned officer, Soldier of the year competition, which was held at McCully Barracks, Mainz-Fintan, began with an in-processing brief by Command Sergeant Major Roger P. Blackwood.

"You are the best from your unit so you are already a winner but only one NCO and one Soldier, from each category, will emerge as the top Iron Warrior," said Blackwood. "I wish I was 19 again so I could do something like this. You have an amazing opportunity to become better Soldiers, better people and better leaders."

From the in-processing the competitors were weighed, taped and sent off to complete their first task.

The packing list inventory was followed by two written exams testing land navigation skills, knowledge of Iron Warrior tasks and Soldier skills.

The next day came early as each Soldier gathered to take the Army Physical Fitness Test. Push-ups, Sit-ups and the two-mile run.

Some sponsors ran with their Soldiers, some screamed and hollered and others kept a watchful eye to make sure their competitors were staying hydrated and injury free.

From the APFT the Soldiers geared up and headed out to Wackernheim's known distance

continued next page...

range. Qualifying on this type of range was new to some participants.

"I think the hardest part of the competition was the range," said SGT Delroy Barnett, a Soldier with 123rd Main Support Battalion, Dexheim Germany. "I have never fired at a K-D range before."

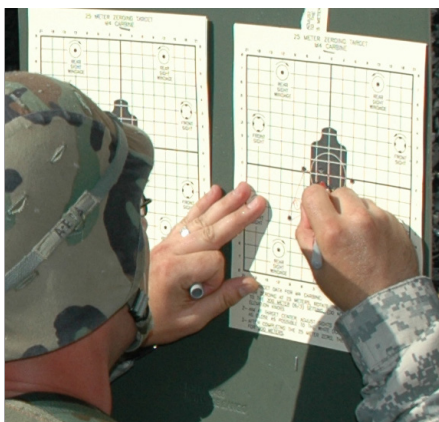
The day was not complete for the participants. The competitors, without their sponsors now had to complete the next event, which was an Urban Orienteering Course.

Each Soldier and NCO was given a satellite photo of the area and a scorecard. They were given five points to find and three hours to find them. They completed this task both during the day and again at night.

The next morning 0500 weigh-in began. Thirty-five pounds per ruck sack was the standard, the conditions, a muggy rainy morning with heat on the way. The NCO and Soldiers took off running, jogging and walking. They had 10 kilometers to complete and they were in a race for time.

The road march brought them to the final physical portion of the competition, the Common Task Training event.

This is no ordinary CTT event, said Klingel. The participants are given an Operations Order and fragmentary orders for each task. This is a completely tactical experience, he continued. The competitors are hands on.



A Soldier checks his shot accuracy during the "zeroing" phase or rifle marksmanship at the Wakenheim range.



Command Sergeants Major from the 1st Armored Division test SGT Brian Yoder's, a Soldier with 7th Corps Support Group, military knowledge in several topics to include 1st Armored Division history, military bearing, and weapons qualifications. Yoder went on to win the top NCO of the year for 1AD separates.

They began with permissions check and from there they were on patrol. Each participant had a different experience, but all were required to react to many things such as direct and indirect fire, improvised explosive devices, casualties, chemical attacks and more.

They also encountered role players along the way. Some were friendly, some were hurt and some were just out to keep them on their toes.

On the final day, sore and tired the team of competitors got up to make a formation one last time. Donned in their class A uniform they waited their turn at the sergeant major board.

"I am sore but extremely motivated," said SPC Spencer Goodfellow, a Soldier with the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment. "I had so much fun and I really appreciated all the training I received here."

Once all the questions had been asked and the scores had been tallied the group headed to the dining facility at McCully.

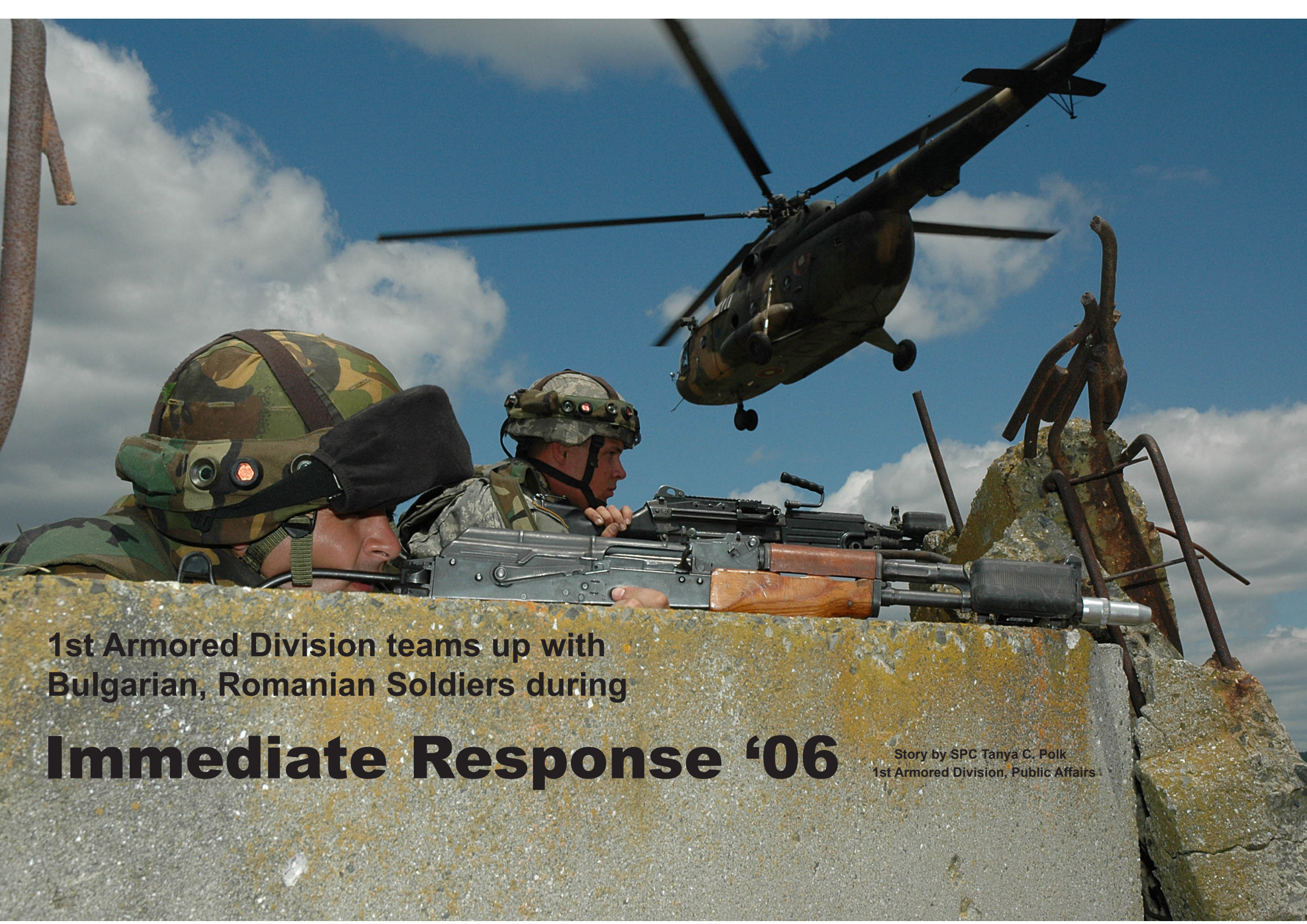
"I want to say again you are all winners," said Blackwood. "I admire you for what you have done and I hope you keep this experience with you always."

With those words Blackwood announced the winners.

SGT Delroy Barnett, a 123rd Main Support Battalion Soldier and SGT Brian Yoder, a Soldier with 7th Corps

Support Group were titled top NCO of the year and Spc. Scott Hanshew, a 123rd Main Support Battalion Soldier and Spc. Jacob Flores, a Soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company 4th Brigade were titled top Soldier of the year. All Soldiers who were chosen competed at the U.S. Army Europe level. SGT Barnett went on to win the USAREUR level competition.





1st Armored Division teams up with
Bulgarian, Romanian Soldiers during

Immediate Response '06

Story by SPC Tanya C. Polk
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division, the Air Force Europe's 492nd Fighter Squadron, U.S. European Command, Bulgarian and Romanian military forces teamed up and participated in a combined training exercise at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria, throughout the month of July. The field exercise was known as Immediate Response 06. The combined armies conducted this peacetime engagement exercise in support of U.S. Army Europe's Theater Engagement Program to increase NATO interoperability.

"Bulgaria and Romania are war-proven allies of the United States," said General David McKiernan, U.S. Army Europe commanding general. "They are valued partners in the global war on terrorism."

"Our ability to train and develop our young Soldiers, our sergeants, our young officers with Romanian and Bulgarian counterparts means that when they operate on the battlefield tomorrow they're already going to know each other," said McKiernan.

The partnered military forces in IR 06, which included Soldiers from 1 AD's 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, Romanian 21st Infantry Regiment and Soldiers from the 61st Stryama Mechanized Brigade Bulgarian Army, got to know each other as they integrated into three platoons. Each platoon had one squad from each country, and each platoon was lead by a different force's leader.

The troops began their partnership training as they participated in a weapons exchange and familiarization exercise, July 16. "It's a unity-building event where we exchange fire weapons with the Romanians and Bulgarians,"



SGT Tremell Cleveland, a Soldier with 1-94 FA, teaches a Bulgarian Soldier how to use an M-16 Rifle during a weapons familiarization exercise at the Novo Selo Training Area, July 18. Romanian and Bulgarian Soldiers taught U.S. troops how to use their weapons as well. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)

ians," said 1LT Caleb McKeel, the 1-94's executive officer. "It's not so much about marksmanship, it's more about team building."

The combined armies fired each other's weapons on five lanes.

"This mission gives us an opportunity to see how other countries work, how they run ranges, and it also

gives us an idea of the capability of different weapons," said McKeel.

The Iron Soldiers trained their NATO partners on how to fire several weapons to include the M-9 pistol, M-16 rifle, M-240B machine gun, M-249 squad automatic weapon and the MK 19-3 grenade machine gun.

Then, the Romanian and Bulgarian troops trained the U.S. Soldiers on how to use their AK-74 and AK-47 assault rifles, as well as their PK and RPK machine guns. McKeel said the weapons the Bulgarian and Romanian forces use are the same as those being used against Soldiers in Iraq.

"If we can learn more about their weapons, maybe it will help someone later in combat," he said.

Helping each other and getting to know each other in the weapons familiarization exercise was essential to IR 06

"Overtime, we began to understand one another."

SSG Richard Elliot
1-94 Field Artillery Regiment

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A Soldier with 1-94 FA teams up with a Romanian counterpart as they prepare to raid a building during a training exercise at the Novo Selo Training Area, July 19. The combined American, Bulgarian, and Romanian team were able to successfully complete their mission despite their cultural and tactical differences. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)

"We worked well as a team. We are of three nations, but nonetheless we are a team."

SSG Florea Sas
Red Scorpions



An integrated crew of American, Bulgarian and Romanian troops await take off in UH-60 Black Hawk at the Novo Selo Training Area, July 21. The troops were conducting an air assault mission- their final combined training exercise for Immediate Response '06. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)



Crouched behind an infantry assault vehicle, a team comprised of Romanian, Bulgarian and 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division Soldiers pull security while their teammates raid a nearby building in a combined training exercise at the Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria, July 18. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)

as several more teambuilding and combat related exercises were in the NATO partners' future.

The 1-94 FA Soldiers stepped into an infantry role as they and their Romanian and Bulgarian counterparts successfully raided a "hostile" infested building during their first combined combat exercise at the NSTA.

Led by the Romanian's Red Scorpions 1LT Constantin Paraschivu, the second platoon used terrain to their advantage as they walked through approximately three kilometers of thick vegetation and remained camouflaged from opposition forces played by the

Hohenfels-based 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment.

The team's original intent was to walk the entire ridgeline to their target, but time constraints pushed the team for a faster alternative. They agreed to jump aboard their Humvees and infantry fighting vehicle (BMP) and bombarded an abandoned building.

"The team reacted perfectly," said SSG Christopher Smith, 2nd platoon squad leader. "It was a two second decision. We did it. We got in there and completed the mission."

Although raid tactics differed, the intermixed platoon worked together, combined their strategies, and achieved their goal. They "killed" the "terrorist" found hiding in the building.

"We worked well as a team," said SSG Florea Sas, platoon sergeant from the Red Scorpions. "We are of three nations, but nonetheless we are a team." After the mission, the platoon summarized their events and discussed what they felt went well and what they thought could be improved upon.

"Overall, we were successful," said Paraschivu. "The best part of this training is that we do things different in each country, but we end up in the same direction."

"We had good communication," continued Paraschivu. Despite language barriers amongst the three nations, the team was able to effectively communicate. Hand signals were used often.

Hand signals turned in to hand shakes as several

Soldiers congratulated each other for the successful completion of their first official combat operation.

The troops' mission was only getting started. Still ahead for the NATO partners was a convoy operations and quick reactions force exercise.

Quick reaction force training is an air assault style exercise designed to train Soldiers to reinforce a unit already in combat, said MAJ Jorge Cordeiro, Maneuver Team observer controller for the Hohenfels-based Joint Multinational Readiness Center.

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Above: An integrated squad takes cover behind a Humvee before raiding a building during a combined training exercise, July 19. (Photo by SPC Tanya C. Polk)



Left: Hand signals are universal, as Soldiers were able to effectively communicate during Immediate Response '06 despite their language barriers. (Courtesy photo)

Below: A Bulgarian native sings a traditional song for troops during a closing festival at the Novo Selo Training Area July 25. (Photo by SGT John Queen)



"We practice this mission with a lot of allied nations because it integrates both air and ground assets," said Cordeiro. "Another reason we do this training is because it's a very common combat mission."

"This type of exercise is mostly reactionary," said Sgt. Kelly Konkus, squad leader with 1-94 FA. "All you need is the right equipment. After that it's all mental."

The QRF training also proved beneficial to the combined forces.

"This is the second time I have done this type of training. It is really good training because it is like a big puzzle, every piece has to fit just right," said SSG Florea Sas of the Romanian army.

After four days of trilateral training, the troops put together the final puzzle piece as they conducted their final Immediate Response combat operation, July 21. Their mission was to fly an hour and a half from the NSTA to a Romanian training sight and capture a mock terrorist leader

in a hostile environment. Dismounting three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters onto Romanian soil, Soldiers hit the ground running. After only 15 minutes on the ground, the troops achieved their goal as they were able to take out all of the hostiles and secure their target.

"Today wraps up all of our training," said SSG Richard Elliot, a team leader with 1-94 FA. "We practiced, rehearsed, we knew what we had to do and then we executed it."

Although from three separate nations, the combined forces grew stronger as Immediate Response's goal to strengthen relationships was achieved according to Elliot.

"Over time we began to understand one another," he said. "Soldiers have a common language. Our tactics are slightly different. Our uniforms are slightly different. Our weapons are slightly different, but this exercise has given us the opportunity to share those differences."



A Bulgarian troop proudly wears the American colors during combined training exercises at the Novo Selo Training Area Bulgaria. (Photo by SGT John Queen)



A New York City Fire Department firefighter thanks SPC Jason Hanson with the 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for his service and bravery in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, June 18.

New York City Fire Department visit wounded Soldiers

Story by SPC Tanya C. Polk
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

Over 30,000 servicemembers have been transported from combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan to the Landstuhl Regional Medical

Facility since the September 11 attacks, according to LRMC staff.

Members of the New York City Fire Department soccer team - neighbors to the terrorist attacked grounds of the World Trade Center - visited some of these Soldiers and thanked them for their heroism.

Along with their gratitude, the NYFD brought the Soldiers T-shirts, hats, and pins as just a small token of their appreciation.

"They put themselves in harm's way much like our brothers did in 9-11," said Jonathan Kanovsky, a New York Police Department detective.

Although sharing heroic occupations, the New York firefighters and detectives place servicemembers on a higher pedestal.

"Our enemy is known when we go into a firefight," said Kanovsky. "You have information on how you're going to attack it. But, every

second, these Soldiers in combat have to be on alert and the pressure that they face 24-7 is unlike anything we face."

The fire crew visited SPC Jason Hanson, an infantryman with the 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment. Hanson was recently wounded in combat and shared his experience with the firefighters.

"They put themselves in harm's way much like our brothers did in 9-11."

Jonathan Kanovsky
New York Police Department

"I was shot in the back by a small caliber," said Hanson. "When I return, I will just continue to do my job to the best I can."

According to SGT Steve Gaddy, a medic

with the 4th Battalion, 27th Armored Regiment, most wounded Soldiers at Landstuhl look forward to returning to the fight.

"Historically, most of the people that leave here are itching to go back," said Gaddy. "They'd rather finish the fight with their buddies."

The Soldier's morale "hit home" to the New York Fire Department.

"It's moving, the sacrifice that people make for the betterment of our country," said Thomas Hunt a fireman with the NYFD. "It's touching, and I have the utmost respect for them. A lot of them thanked us for what we do," continued Hunt, "but, these Soldiers are the real heroes."



Running for a good cause

Story by SPC Jennifer McFadden
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

With droplets of sweat running into his eyes he fights to continue. One foot after another, pounding the pavement he completes lap after lap, as any Soldier would on a mission; the mission, a 25-hour run for a Wiesbaden charity.

On a cool Wiesbaden morning German, Soldier and civilian running teams gathered at the starting line waiting for that get ready, get set and go.

They took off running, lap after lap with on lookers cheering each round about.

And in the spirit of German-American partnership 1st Armored Division showed their support for the event by signing up their officers, noncommissioned officers and civilians who all participated in the two-day event.

Wearing team shirts with the 1st Armored Division logo and their names on the back, each member could be seen and cheered on by other Soldiers and German spectators.

"It feels really good to be out here," said LTC John Peeler, 1st Armored Division's operations officer. "The competition has been really exciting and wearing the division shirt we knew we had to look good and do well. It really is a boost," he said.

The race had a few rules, each team had to have a runner running at all times and they had to run a total of 25 hours. At the end of the day 1 AD came in with 309 laps totaling 185 miles.

The other participants in the event were host nation organizations such as the Polizei, Hessen lawyers and judges, and even high schools pitched in to get involved.

The proceeds of the event will go to the Wiesbaden Sport Promotion Club, an organization that support up and coming young athletics by offering training and financial support.

"I was really surprised at how big a deal this is," said CPT Joshua Trigo, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division. "Everyone is out here. Germans, Americans, Soldiers, civilians and even little kids participated, and it is all for a really great cause."



LTC James Kinkade, 1st Armored Division logistics officer runs along side German, American and civilian running teams in a 25-hour run held at the Kurpark, Wiesbaden Sept. 16-17. The event was a charity event supporting the Wiesbaden Sport Promotion Club. (Photo by SPC Jennifer McFadden)

The race really was for the young and the young at heart.

Some teams were running for the competition. Some teams were just running for fun but at the end of the day the effort was for a charity.

"It was really good to see the general staff out here working as a team," said Peeler. "This has been so much fun and has been a great family atmosphere. The Germans are so nice and welcoming. I think everyone is having a lot of fun," he said



"Once a MUD Soldier, always a MUD Soldier," a grungy sergeant boisterously says with a smile on his face and a rasp in his voice.

He's standing wearily as he peels off his uniform jacket to cool down at the end of a 12-mile road-march. The dirt that covered him at the start is now a layer of lumpy sweat-soaked goo. His energy drained, he leaves his brown t-shirt half untucked as he takes a swig from his canteen.

Though worn-out and exhausted he and other Soldiers from the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigades, 5th Battalion, 7th ADA know they're only at the half way point of a grueling competition they volunteered for.

MUD Soldier Competition

Story by SGT John Queen
69th ADA Brigade Public Affairs Office

These Air Defense Soldiers, 65 in all, put themselves to the test August 22 in a three-day training event and competition called MUD Soldier.

MUD, short for Mountain, Urban Destroyer, is a physically, mentally and emotionally demanding competition that can best be compared to a cavalry spur ride.

"Participating in an event like this allows for more self pride," said Spc. Tony Delgado from the battalion's Charlie Battery. "It's great because it lets us know where we are at."

The competition began with an early morning physical fitness test followed by a trip to the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 at Campo in Hanau. During the first day the participants also took a written skills test that covered general military knowledge.

Once the first phase of MUD Soldier was complete in Hanau, the troopers piled on to buses and shuttled off to the American training area near Aschaffenburg 20 miles away.

At the new training area the event became more physically demanding with the candidates having to negotiate an obstacle course, situational training exercise lanes, a hand-grenade assault course and land navigation courses. Along with these events the ADA Soldiers had to show off their skills at digging fighting positions and weapons assembly.

"It takes a lot to do this," said Sgt. Daniel Smith from Alpha Battery. "Every Soldier gave it their all."

Smith, who finished in the number 10 spot of the road-march, is training for Special Forces selection in September.



Like playing a huge video game, Soldiers take aim using specially modified rifles at the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000. (Photos by SGT John Queen)

On the last day of the competition the 5-7 Soldiers returned to Hanau for the last two events, a 10-mile relay and combatives tournament.

Throughout the MUD Soldier competition a cadre of senior noncommissioned officers from the battalion scored the participants on an individual basis and as a team. Each of the battalion's batteries was represented during the competition by a small platoon of 13 Soldiers.

"I've always enjoyed responding to a challenge," said Bravo Battery's Staff Sgt. Scott McAlister. "This was an opportunity to prove something not only to myself, but to my unit. I wanted to see how well I can handle myself during something as rigorous as this event."

"There has been a lot of studying, intense PT, ruck marches, land navigation, and common task training," explained McAlister who's been training for the event for the last month. "Winning would be outstanding because it would mean that soldier is the total package."

With all the events complete and the total score compiled, the top honor went to Bravo Battery for the team portion of the competition, while 2nd Lt. Christopher Majors from Bravo Battery came out on top for the individual scoring.



502nd Engineers bridge friendship with German Soldiers

Story by SPC Andrew Orillion
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs

The 502nd Engineer Company braved the water of the Frankfurt Main River, August 9, during a pontoon bridge crossing exercise. The event was the second half of a mission rehearsal exercise that began in June, with a crossing of the Rhien River. Building bridges, both dry and wet, is the primary function of the 502nd Engineer Company. The August 9 exercise was a chance to show off their skill at this task.



1LT Thomas Jones, 1st Platoon leader of the 502nd Engineer Company, talks strategy with fellow 1LT Holger Baierlein, 2nd Platoon leader of 2nd Company, 251st Feld Jäger Battalion, as Soldiers from the 502nd build a pontoon bridge across the Frankfurt Main river. (Photo by SPC Andrew Orillion)

"We built a five float ribbon bridge across the Main river, which means we connected five pontoons to build a floating bridge that is then towed by boats," said Capt. A. J. Florkowski, 502nd company commander. "This type of training is a good way to maintain our skills." At the same time that part of the 502nd was crossing the Main River, another section was busy

building a dry bridge at Campo Pond.

"By building both types of bridges, we can best show the capabilities of our unit," Florkowski said. "It is also a good way to show the community what we do, and help build better relations."

The August 9 exercise was about more than just building bridges to overcome obstacles, it was also about building a bridge between U.S. and German Soldiers.

Lending a helping hand to the soldiers of the 502nd

Engineer Company were soldiers from the 2nd Company, 251st Feld Jäger Battalion. Feld Jägers are the German military police.

The Feld Jägers helped out by providing traffic control for the convoy of vehicles and bridge pieces as they moved to the river and by acting as security during the exercise.

"Convoy protection is a routine thing for us, but it was good to see how the U.S. soldiers work and perform the same task," said 1st Lt. Holger

Baierlein, 2nd platoon leader, 2nd Company, 251st Feld Jäger Battalion.

This was the first time that Baierlein has worked with the U.S. Army and the first time he had participated in a river crossing. It was also the first time under Florkowski that the 502nd Engineer Company had transported a foreign vehicle across a river.

After the river crossing, the two units participated in a



Soldiers with the 502nd Engineer Company drop a boat into the Frankfurt Main River, Aug. 9. Soldiers use the boat to connect pontoons and build a bridge across the river. (Photo by SPC Andrew Orillion.)

convoy training exercise complete with simulated improvised explosive device. The Feld Jäger assisted by providing security for the convoy. For Jones, working with the German military provided good experience for working down range.

"If we are in Iraq, we may have to work with soldiers who don't speak English or have never worked with U.S. soldiers before, this type of training helps the unit

prepare," Jones said.

For Baierlein the value of the training lay in the experience itself.


"It was a great experience to work with the U.S. Army and use their equipment," Baierlein said.

"We learn a lot from each other when we train together, it is win-win."



A look at the
2nd Brigade Combat Team

Supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom



U.S. Army Soldiers depart a home after speaking with an Iraqi family and filling out a census in Tameem, Ramadi, Iraq, Aug 7, 2006. The census is geared towards finding out general information on the household and to see if they have any concerns or questions the Army can help with. The Soldiers are from Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, attached to Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. (U.S. Air Force photo by TSGT Jeremy T. Lock)

Somewhere in Baghdad...

1st Armored Division unit shifts from artillery to infantry

Story by SPC Jason Dangel
4th Infantry Division Public Affairs

As the sun begins to set, beckoning another Baghdad night, the rumbling sounds of armored vehicles resonate from a small patrol base south of the Iraqi capital.

Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, currently attached to the 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team here, are starting out on a mission.

Recently reassigned to a new area of operations, "Bear" Battery, accustomed to patrolling densely populated areas in southern part of the Iraqi capital, now operates among open fields and farmland, searching for hidden weapons caches.

The Soldiers who man the guard towers and patrol the area daily live in austere conditions, yet some still call their patrol base their second home.

"Up until about three weeks ago, we were primarily doing patrols all throughout Baghdad," said SSG Richard Butler, a Battery B squad leader.

Butler said his platoon got plenty of real-world combat experience in downtown Baghdad as they conducted mounted and dismounted patrols, tackled route clearance security missions and responded to hostile activity.

SPC Steven Schaefer, a B Battery gunner, said he and his fellow Soldiers have also seen improvised explosive devices and have been attacked with small-arms fire while working in their new area of operations.

"Everybody in this unit has seen enemy contact," Butler said.

"It's something that happens all the time. You can't expect to go out and not get attacked. You have to be ready all the time."

When the day started, the Soldiers of "Bear" Battery — a field artillery battery working as a motorized infantry platoon — had awakened early for mission briefings. CPT Kirill Tsekanovskiy, 2nd platoon leader, briefed his

Soldiers with detailed diagrams on the task ahead.

"The mission we will be conducting today is called Operation Bear Hunt," Tsekanovskiy, a native of Ukraine, told his Soldiers.

During "Bear Hunt" the troops will search a vast area south of Baghdad — an exhausting task given the many small places where the enemy may hide weapons. In addition, Tsekanovskiy said his Soldiers cannot get information about the hiding spots from area residents because terrorists have intimidated them.

"This mission won't be easy," he said.

"It's going to be a hot one out there," platoon sergeant SFC Deoraj Baldeo told the troops, adding a reminder that they should drink plenty of water during the mission, before sending them to get some rest and to prepare their equipment.

Later the platoon met with a team of Iraqi National Police officers, and as daylight began to subside over the Baghdad horizon, the troops and their Iraqi comrades were already searching through the farmlands for anything out of the ordinary.

The Soldiers identified several possible hiding spots for weapons, but by the end of the day, they had found no caches. Still, it's important to look, the Soldiers say.



SSG Luis Alicea, squad leader, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, searches for possible hiding spots for weapons caches on a farm south of the Iraqi capital May 27. Alicea is a member of the 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, which currently has a battalion attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Everybody in this unit works hard and loves what they're doing," said team leader SGT Chris Myers.

"Regardless of whether or not we actually find something, we are still making a difference, because we are out there doing our jobs."

Walking back to his up-armored Humvee, sweat dripping from his brow, Butler was frustrated at not finding weapons today, but optimistic about the days to come. This is only the first day of the mission, he said. Tomorrow is another day.



There is an old saying that the last person who war is a Soldier. But a Soldier must be prepared for war at all times. Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division's 141st Signal Battalion are doing just that at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Grafenwoehr.

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Training prepares Soldiers to fight and survive in combat environment



SGT Michael Jenny, a Soldier with the 141st Signal Battalion, 1st Armored Division, and his crew engage "enemy troops" during Gunnery Table VII at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Grafenwoehr, September 19. Company C, and Headquarters and Headquarters Company of 141st SIG have been partaking in a 20-day gunnery rotation to keep troops tactically proficient and combat ready at all times.

**Story by SPC Tanya Polk
1st Armored Division, Public Affairs**

Two of the battalion's companies are already at war, deployed in 1st Armored Division's fight in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Two other companies — Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Charlie

Company — are partaking in Iron Warrior Gunnery, an approximately 25-day training event which helps troops learn and improve skills such as individual marksmanship and convoy operations.

"Iron Warrior Gunnery keeps everybody on the same level," said LTC Carlos L. Walker, the 141st commander.

"They are going through the exact same tasks that Alpha and Bravo companies went through to prepare themselves to deploy. Our deployed troops are living it now, and what we're doing here is making sure that all of our Soldiers are ready."

The training the Soldiers receive is a bit different than what might be expected of combat service and combat support troops.

They are taught to be aggressive and perform like infantrymen when fired upon.

They also get more training in gunnery skills, because Walker said, the Army views that proficiency as "more now as a basic Soldier skill, rather than just a combat arms skill."

"Downrange, there is no safe zone," said SPC Joseph Farrand of Charlie Company.

"There is no place where I can say 'I'm just a signal person.' I may be (a "signal Soldier"), but the bullets don't discriminate. This exercise made it possible for us to learn that, and taught us how to survive when it's our chance at war."

The signal troops started Iron Warrior Gunnery with the basics — individual marksmanship. Once each Soldier qualified with his individual weapon, he was able to move to the next task or table. Each table serves as a building block to get to the final table, explained Walker.

The Soldiers even had a chance to put their communication skills to the test, as working together was essential

to complete Tables VII and VIII. Those tables required the troops, divided into patrol teams of four or five, to dismount their vehicles using tactical skills and engage simulated enemy targets at five different locations.

"It may come a time when we're 'downrange' and we may have to move on our own from one location to the other," said SFC Humberto Martinez of Charlie Company.

"This teaches (our Soldiers) how to react when encountering different types of obstacles and how to recognize possible items that could be (improvised explosive devices) or some type of explosives along the route," he added.

Unit officials said the training was intended to reflect the realism and realities of battle as much as possible, and for everyone involved, down to some of the units' most junior Soldiers. During the exercise, SPC Sandra Parcher said she and two of her Charlie Company comrades got a healthy dose of that realism.

"We were told this morning with no advance warning or planning that we were not going to have an NCO with us," said Parcher.

"This left us with a three-man team who had hardly any experience. We had to learn to adapt anyway."

The bottom line of the exercise was to put the Soldiers in as realistic a training environment and teach them skills that are vital to their survival in a combat environment, and equally important, to mold them into an effective team.

"The main idea is to get us to work together as a team, so that we have that cohesion," said Farrand. "I got a chance to see what my buddies are capable of, and now I'm a lot more comfortable deploying with them."

